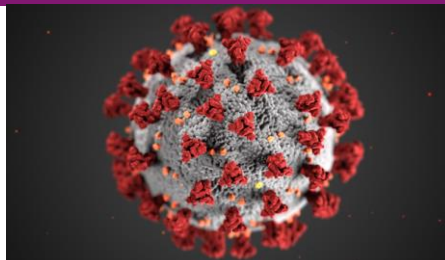


Mental Wellness during COVID-19

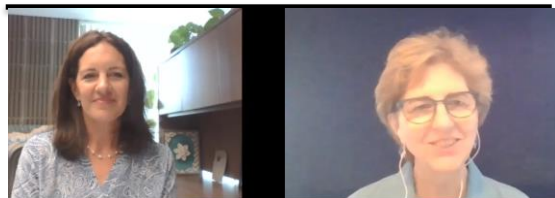
Special edition newsletter series from the Office of Children's Mental Health (OCMH)



June 10, 2020

To access this newsletter online and connect to the embedded web links please visit children.wi.gov. A link to the newsletter is on the Home page.

Collective Impact Partner Interview



Linda Hall, OCMH (right), interviews Tina Crave, Watertown Community Health Foundation (left).

Tina Crave, President and CEO of the Watertown Community Health Foundation and a leader of the *Every Child Thrives* initiative in Jefferson and Dodge counties talks about effective virtual meetings and how COVID-19 has prompted prioritizing of social-emotional learning for young children and community level resilience. This is the most recent OCMH interview of a collective impact network member on how the pandemic is affecting their work. Listen to the [interview with Tina](#). And check out a playlist of our prior interviews [here](#).

Lived Experience Voice: Honoring a young adult who made a difference

Dosha "DJay" Joi – Lived Experience Leader

DJay was well-known in Wisconsin and nationally for his advocacy on behalf of foster care youth and young adults who, like him, experienced the foster care system. Sadly, on May 14, at age 28, he succumbed to complications of COVID-19. DJay brought experience, passion and warmth to his multiple foster care system change roles.

Joi was an accomplished leader with the Wisconsin Youth Advisory Council (YAC) of current and former foster youth supporting child welfare and health care improvements for foster youth; a member of the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) Child Welfare Advisory Council where he challenged policymakers to see things from the perspective of youth; a joyful leader at the annual Hands Around the Capital foster care lobbying day event; and a champion for LGBTQ+ rights.

DJay served as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer supporting the best interests of individual children in Milwaukee. He received multiple Champions for Change awards from DCF and recently was honored by Kids Matter Inc. for his CASA volunteer work. Additionally, he supported the Kids in Crisis series as a guest speaker.

In addition to state-level advocacy, DJay was active in the national FosterClub organization, participating in their Congressional lobbying efforts. In fact to honor DJay and his advocacy, his U.S. Representative and friend, Gwen Moore

along with Representative Karen Bass of Los Angeles and Co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth, have introduced the [Dosha Joi Immediate Coverage for Former Foster Youth Act](#). This legislation would make the effective date for foster youth being eligible for Medicaid until age 26 the date the legislation passes instead of the originally proposed date of January 2023.

Having completed a Bachelor's degree, Joi's next goal was to become a psychiatric nurse. He wanted to ensure that children and youth with mental illnesses are not overmedicated. In his community, he was known for reaching out with supportive phone calls and smiles to other foster care alumni.

DJay Joi's energy, dedication, and authenticity will be missed by many in Milwaukee, Madison, and throughout the nation. His special way of bringing his lived experience to bear on so many policy issues was a bright light for many of us. A light that has been extinguished far too soon. [Read more](#).



Dosha "DJay" Joi volunteers at the Hands Around the Capitol lobbying event.

Some three months ago we all joined in taking an unprecedented journey – life as we knew it came to a standstill as our state and nation rushed to stop the spread of the coronavirus. Our concern for the mental well-being of children motivated us to offer this bi-weekly newsletter to share resources, connection, and hope. As our collective focus now shifts to the “new normal” we announce this issue of *Mental Wellness during COVID-19* will be our last. We hope you have enjoyed receiving this and gained from the information we have shared. Stay well and hopeful!

The power of a photo... to shift our thoughts and relax us in times of stress. Imagine the peaceful sound of waves splashing on Hermosa Beach, Los Angeles. Photo by A. Katz.

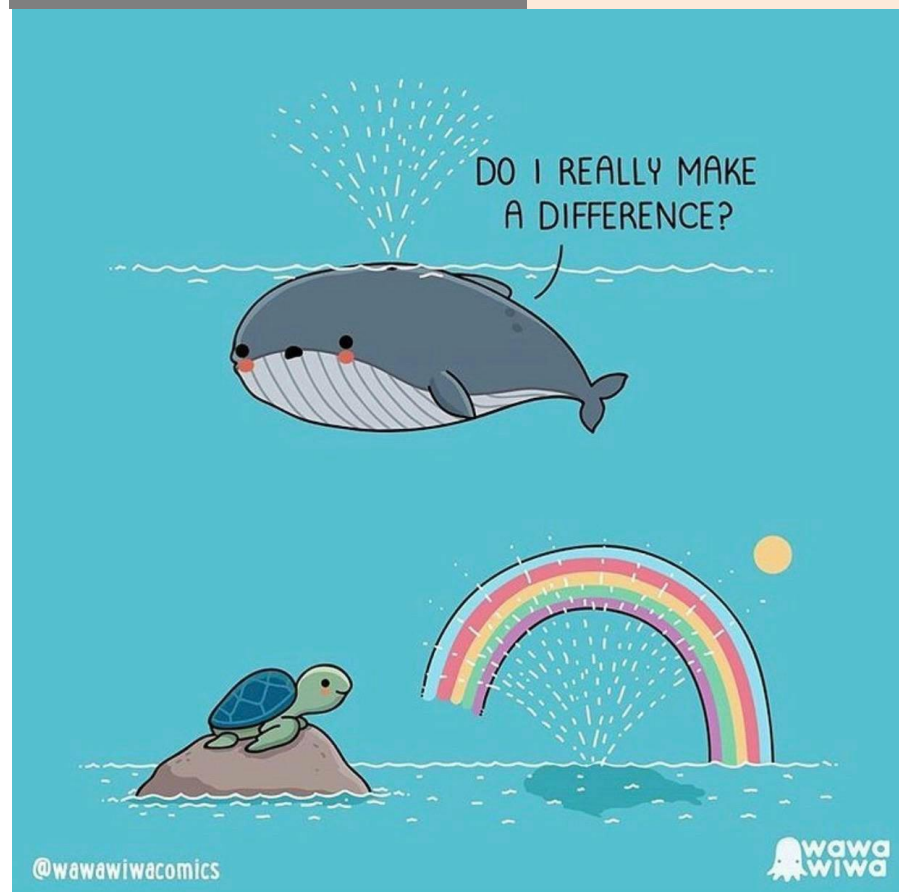
Supporting Infants and Young Children as they return to Group Settings

As our youngest people return to their group settings it is common to see changes in behavior, emotions, and social interactions. The [Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health](#) provides valuable [information](#) for you as you make this transition.

Tips to Help Children Birth to 6

- Check in with yourself and reflect on your own emotional state
- Nurture your relationship
- Remember the 5:1 ratio – strive for 5 positive interactions for every 1 negative interaction
- Support friendship skills
- Resume routines
- Maintain and remind children of age-appropriate expectations and rules
- Provide positively stated directions
- Use positive reinforcement
- Label emotions as children experience them
- Offer reassurance and validation that all feelings are OK
- Create a safe and cozy place
- Teach and model positive coping skills
- Support expression and meaning-making through play
- Collaborate with the other important adults in the child’s life
- Nurture connection when connection looks different

YOU
can make a difference for someone



Office of Children’s Mental Health

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